

# STATE OF ALASKA

JAY S. HAMMOND, GOVERNOR

## DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

333 RASPBERRY ROAD  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99502

March 20, 1979

Mr. George H. Balazs  
Asst. Marine Biologist  
H.I.M.B.  
P.O. Box 1346  
Coconut Island, Kaneohe  
Hawaii, 96744

Dear Mr. Balazs:


In reference to "atomic testing"; the test was actually down at Johnson Island. We encountered an unidentified submarine during the night and COMPAC Fleet put us on a search and locate mission since they believed it was a Russian sub attempting to get close enough to the test to monitor the explosion. We went into a grid pattern after the submarine "ducked" and spent about eight hours searching. In that process we intruded into the flash zone, finally broke off the search and ran north. It sure did light up the sky momentarily but we felt no other impacts. I don't imagine it did any of the Johnson Island turtles any good.

Of other interest was a report last Spring of a green sea turtle carcass found about one mile upstream of the mouth of Montana Creek in Upper Cook Inlet (about 80 miles north of Anchorage). I couldn't find the carcass for positive identification but the man who reported it measured the carapace length at 27 inches. He called the office, stated that he was very familiar with snapping turtles and that this wasn't one. They don't exist in Alaska either, so I referred him to some library books and he called back to say the carapace did look just like a green sea turtle's.

We have had two other sightings, by biologists, of green sea turtles in Alaskan waters over the past 15 years, and I think it was last year that some southeastern fishermen killed a huge leatherback (claiming they thought it was a sea lion). I believe they were prosecuted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Anyway, good luck on your turtle project, I wish I could trade you jobs. I much prefer turtles and warm water to moose and ice!

Sincerely,



Ray Kramer  
Game Biologist



PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

The trip herein reported was to include the following activities as time and conditions would permit.

1. General familiarization survey of all the islands of the Refuge excepting Lisianski and Pearl and Hermes Reef.
2. Examination and, if possible, further study of the Nihoa Miller Bird and its habitat requirements in relation to a possible transference of this species to Laysan Island.
3. Examination of islands occupied by the Government HIRAN project personnel for signs of undue disturbance or introduction of unwanted exotic weed seeds.
4. To further photograph significant portions of the vegetation and habitat to be found on these islands.
5. Observation and counts of the monk seals and on Laysan, the teal.

ITINERARY

- June 8 - Boarded LST "Stone County" 1141 at 0700. Departed Pearl Harbor. Cruised off Kauai that night.
- June 9 - Enroute from Kauai to Nihoa.
- June 10 - Landed on Nihoa at 0615. Returned to ship at 1345. Left for Necker Island.
- June 11 - Landed on Necker Island at 0630. Returned to ship at 0900. Woodside debark at French Frigates Shoal at 1830 for return to Honolulu. Helicopter hit aerial wire on Tern Island so ship was delayed until repairs effected.
- June 12 - Standing-by off French Frigates Shoal during repair, then departure for Gardner Pinnacles.
- June 13 - Standing-by off Gardner Pinnacle. No landing attempted by members of our party due to crowded conditions ashore and rough weather.
- June 14 - Landed on Laysan Island at 0930. Remained on Laysan Island until June 19 at which time we departed. Arrived at ship 1645.
- June 20 - Enroute to French Frigates Shoal. Due to atomic testing, detour was made for eight hours.
- June 21 - Arrived at French Frigates Shoal; debarked. Plane flight from Hickam cancelled so Marshall, Beardsley, and Kramer returned to ship overnight.
- June 22 - Returned to Tern Island. Boarded Hickam Air Force plane in afternoon and arrived in Honolulu at 1930.

*A report on a survey trip to the HIWAIR June 1962 by P.S. Kravlen*